

The claims of Group 1 and Group 2 should be grouped together. The claims of Group 2 are directed to bidding using automatic and manual authentication. The claims of Group 1 are directed to bidding using automatic authentication and recite the specifics of one type of manual authentication. As such, Group 2 is more properly characterized as a genus, and Group 1 is a species of that genus.

Claims 86-96 should be grouped with Group 3 since claims 86-96 are "means" claims corresponding to the method claims of Group 3. MPEP § 806.05(e).

Claims 97-109 should be grouped with Group 1 since claims 97-109 are apparatus claims corresponding to the method claims of Group 1. MPEP § 806.05(e).

Claims 110-121 should be grouped with Group 1. Claims 29-43 of Group 1 and claims 110-121 are directed to the same invention, but from different "points of view." Claims 29-43 cover steps that would be performed by a server computer that implements the invention, and claim 110-121 cover steps that would be performed by a client computer that interacts with a server computer that implements the invention. As such, the same searching and patentability analysis would apply to both inventions. These two sets of claims are needed to provide coverage for two different direct infringers.

In conclusion, applicants submit that the claims might be more properly grouped as follows:

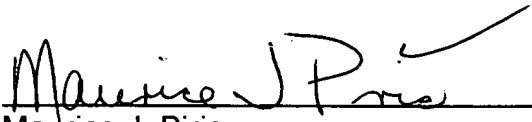
Group	Claims
A.	29-59, 71-85, 97-121
B.	60-70, 86-96

Based on the above remarks, applicants request reconsideration of this application and its early allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Enclosures:
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